

No. 179 April 1991

Hillandale

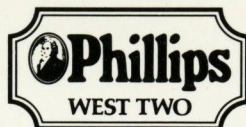
NEWS



Featured by

ROY FOX

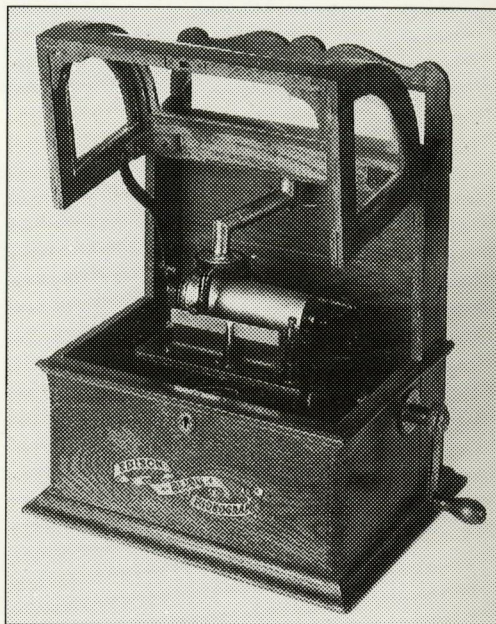
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES : U. K. and Europe - £10.00 per annum.

Worldwide (outside Europe) - £11 per annum, or U. S. \$22

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Passing Notes

Although readers seldom write directly to me expressing their views on the magazine (except to criticise what they may see as serious faults) some suggestions on improvements to the *Hillandale News* and its contents do reach me by second or third hand. One subject on which many readers clearly have strong feelings concerns the balance in the contents of each issue between what might be called the 'constants' or 'regulars', such as letters, reviews, meetings reports and advertisements, and articles, whether research, nostalgia, biographical or whatever. The general consensus seems to be that readers want a great deal more of the latter and less of the former! This is surely no surprise to anyone and hopefully it will also come as no surprise to anyone to hear that I entirely agree! Clearly, reviews of re-releases on LP/CD, obituaries of musical figures etc. are of interest, but I would far rather fill the magazine with original research on artists, record labels, company histories and so forth, which is surely the best use to which such a publication as this may be put. The point I wish to make however is that I can't do this without the articles to fill the space; if the majority of - very welcome - contributions I receive are reviews, obituaries, letters etc. rather than articles then that will naturally be reflected in the content of the magazine.

Naturally, I am delighted to be receiving meetings reports, reviews and letters from so many people - especially from new contributors, helping to widen our 'roster', and wouldn't wish to curtail the flow; but there are hundreds of members with a specialist interest, a pet theory or a favourite artist who could, if they all put pen to paper and wrote half a dozen pages, fill every issue in advance for the next decade! I make no apologies for harping on about a subject done to death by almost every previous editor - without these contributions there would be no magazine to read! So if, after reading this issue, you think there are too many reviews, or obituaries, or reports, why not put things right yourself!

While on the subject of historical research, a word on the relocation of the Society Archives. John Calvert of Cirencester has taken over responsibility for them from the late John Carreck. Queries about the material contained in the archive, or material that members may wish to donate, may be sent to John Calvert:

Mr. J. Calvert, [REDACTED]
Siddington, Cirencester GL7 6HD.

Charles Levin

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.**

Hence the deadline for the June issue will be **15th April.**

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

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Twenty nine salerooms throughout the United Kingdom. Members of the Society of Fine Art Auctioneers

Al Bowlly, Roy Fox and others

by Peter Cliffe

Peter Cliffe's recent book "Fascinating Rhythm" deals with dance tunes and their composers, dance bands and their performers. We give below an extract from his chapter covering the year 1931. It is reprinted by kind permission of the author and of Egon Publishers, Ltd. A review of the complete book appears later in this issue.

Roy Fox's Cafe de Paris band had been unkindly criticised by those unaware that it had only been engaged to support his 'whispering cornet'. He received better notices when he formed a fine British band to make 'house' records for Decca until he established himself in London. Lew Stone was pianist and Spike Hughes on bass, both men contributing arrangements. The singers were Betty Bolton and Al Bowlly.

The new Fox band made its recording debut on January 5, opening with Rodgers and Hart's "Ten Cents a Dance", a marvellous song from "Simple Simon", a Ziegfeld theatre production which had begun in February 1930. The following month Ruth Etting made her beautiful recording. Fox allocated it to Betty Bolton, and the arranger was Spike Hughes.

Roy Fox's big opportunity came in May when he became resident bandleader at the new Monseigneur Restaurant, close to Piccadilly Circus. He made some personnel changes, taking on Nat Gonella and Sid Buckman for his trumpets, and Joe Ferrie as solo trombonist; his guitarist was Al Bowlly. It was a band of top players and sounded good; but the 'whispering cornet' fell silent at the end of October, when Fox decided to leave the playing to others.

Because the band was only a few feet away from the dancers, on a slightly raised stage, the music had to be restrained. Fox knew exactly what was required of him, and his band made an excellent impression, as did its leader, with his faultless tails, soft voice and good manners. The Monseigneur band became a broadcasting favourite, but Fox was taken ill and from October, 1931, to the end of March, 1932, Lew Stone had to deputise.

The Fox band made records for Decca during every month of 1931, his Monseigneur band beginning to do so in June. Many had vocals by Al Bowlly, who had a fine sense of rhythm and a most distinctive voice, but whose diction at times bordered on the slovenly. At his best, however (and that was often), he was beyond doubt one of the most talented vocalists in Britain. Albert Alick Bowlly, of Greek and Lebanese parentage, was born on January 7, 1899, at Lourenco Marques, in Portugese East Africa. He moved to Johannesburg, where he had his own barbershop, but having become a proficient banjoist (and later guitarist), and aware that he had a pleasant singing voice, decided to try his luck with the bands.

For a time he worked with the rather obscure outfits of Edgar Adeler and Jimmy Lequime in India; later he joined Arthur Briggs and his Savoy Syncopators in Germany. In 1928 he came to London and sang for Fred Elizalde; but Elizalde being too hot for his time, Bowly ended up singing on the streets.

It was his engagement by Fox that put Bowly in the big time, although he had been singing with Ray Noble's 'house' band since November, 1930. His dark good looks and velvety voice commanded attention; his career blossomed; and the time he spent in New York with Noble gave him international stature.



In January, 1937 he returned to England, toured in Variety, and began to record with various bands. His voice had become singularly rich, particularly after an operation on his vocal chords. He made his last recording on April 2, 1941, singing Irving Berlin's "When That Man is Dead and Gone", an illusion to Adolf Hitler.

Fifteen days later, while in his Jermyn Street flat during an air raid, a bomb blast blew him out of bed, killing him instantly.

Among the many recordings Bowly made with Fox's Monseigneur band in 1931 were two particularly pleasing songs. "Lazy Day", a languorous ballad suiting his sometimes rather drawling style to perfection, had an Earl Martin lyric and a tune by George Posford, who made some useful contributions to British popular music.

Born Benjamin George Ashwell Posford in Folkestone on March 23, 1906, he was educated at Downside and Christ's College, Cambridge. Like so many successful songwriters, he began by studying law, but in 1930 started to compose music for BBC productions, and later for such films as Associated British's "The Good Companions" (1932), in which Jessie Matthews gave a sparkling performance.

Bowly actually recorded "Lazy Day" twice, his version for Fox being waxed five days after he had appeared with Ray Noble's New Mayfair Dance Orchestra. It was not uncommon for vocalists to record the same song more than once, and it made for some interesting comparisons.

"You Forgot Your Gloves", an equally attractive ballad, written by Edward Eliscu and composed by Ned Lehak, had been featured in the "Third Little Show" at New York's Music Box Theatre, which opened in June of that year. Bowly recorded it in October, just prior to Roy Fox's illness.

In September a new band began to play at the Savoy Hotel under the joint direction of alto sax player Howard Jacobs and pianist Carroll Gibbons. The Savoy Hotel Orpheans bore little resemblance to their illustrious predecessors, styles having greatly changed in the intervening years. A rather bland style prevailed, probably bringing sighs of relief from a management with uncherished memories of Elizalde's short but stormy residence.

Obviously the newcomers fitted in well, for the Orpheans remained at the Savoy for the rest of the Thirties, throughout the war years, and into the early post-war period.

The band cut its first Columbia side in October, with Al Bowly as guest vocalist. "There's a Time and a Place for Everything", a ballad by Roy Turk and Fred Ahlert, got a rather lukewarm reception from the *Melody Maker*, which referred to "Some florid piano work by Carroll Gibbons". Bowly was merely "the vocalist", and considered "only just right".

The Savoy Hotel Orpheans had some accomplished instrumentalists apart from Carroll Gibbons. His co-director, Howard Jacobs, liked to play solos in a rather restrained Rudy Wiedoeft manner.

Both Reginald Leopold and Hugo Rignold, the violinists, became famous, Leopold for his tasteful 'palm court' music and Rignold as conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Rudy Starita presided over the drums and xylophone.

"Sweet and Lovely", recorded ten days later, had been a Gus Arnheim, Harry Tobias and Jules Lemare hit for Bing Crosby, but Bowly's version did him no discredit. the *Melody Maker* unbent very little, deciding that the record was "indeed sweet and nearly lovely", but "the vocalist" seemed "a bit uncertain".

Columbia obviously thought highly of the band, which never recorded for any other label; it became a regular visitor to their studios.

Although the Orpheans soon became popular at the Savoy, they faced competition from a band that had been there since August, 1930, the colourful Gaucho Tango Orchestra, directed by Geraldo. Neither its costumes nor its tipica-style music were authentic, much of the latter originating in Europe.

Born in London in August, 1904, Gerald Bright was an accomplished pianist who had studied at the Royal Academy of Music. For five years he led a broadcasting band at the Hotel Majestic, St. Anne's-on-Sea, before assembling his Gauchos and transforming himself into Geraldo.

Geraldo's Gaucho Tango Orchestra lasted for about seven years, although long before its demise he had become increasingly involved with 'straight' dance music, much of it very lush and sweet. When swing arrived, Geraldo's bands sometimes gave a fiery performance, and later even a creditable impression of Stan Kenton. Too frequently, however, his battery of excellent singers were permitted to reduce the band to an accompanying role. 'Gerry' died at Vevey, Switzerland, on May 5, 1974.

A typical Geraldo Gaucho Tango Orchestra recording of 1931 was "An Old Spanish Tango", a German song by Fritz Rotter and Walter Jurmann, with an English lyric by Frank Eyton. the band had an unvarying style and was probably more entertaining visually than on the air or on records.



Geraldo, in the mid 1930s

The Thirties never had anything like the rich cavalcade of stage musicals that added charm to the Twenties, but the West End did offer something appealing from time to time. "Stand Up and Sing" opened at the London Hippodrome in March, 1931, with lyrics by Douglas Furber and music by Vivian Ellis and Phillip Charig. "It's Not You" and "There's Always Tomorrow" were duets by Jack Buchanan and Elsie Randolph. Both were recorded for Columbia by Ray Starita's band, still in residence at the Ambassadors' Club, with vocals by Maurice Elwin.

Bandleaders moved from label to label as frequently as they changed the places at which they played. Jack Harris stayed at the Grosvenor House throughout 1931, but left Decca for the new, ten-inch Broadcast Super-Twelve label, resplendent in gold and bright red.

At this time, Harris's vocalist was Harry Bentley, a well above average singer. Sadly, he died on March 3, 1935, aged only 36. Among the records he made with Harris were "Moonlight Saving Time", a novel idea expressed by Irving Kahal and Harry Richman, and "When I Take My Sugar to Tea", an Irving Kahal, Pierre Norman and Sammy Fain song which the band swung blithely.

Later in the year, the Harris band and Bentley recorded "That's My Desire", a ballad by Carroll Loveday and Helmy Kresa which came and went without much comment in 1931 but shot to the top of the American hit parade sixteen years later.

Apart from his many records with 'house' and regular bands, Jack Plant appeared on various labels as solo artist, although often in disguise. Among his 'Jack Gordon' sides for Imperial was "You'll be mine in Apple Blossom Time", a fair example of Tin Pan Alley pastorella, with a Charles Tobias lyric and a good tune by Peter de Rose.

Columbia issued Plant under his real name, although whoever labelled him as a baritone had never heard him sing. He always treated a song with respect, and in the case of "I Surrender, Dear" tackled a recent hit by Bing Crosby. One of the current crop of very soulful effusions, it had a lyric by Gordon Clifford and music by Bing's old partner Harry Barris, already showing his mettle as a songwriter.

In February 1931, the Paris Opera House opened its doors to Jack Hylton and his Orchestra, a singular honour, for it was the first time a variety show had been staged there. Afterwards the director personally congratulated Hylton. Among the highlights of the show were excerpts from Stravinsky's operetta "Mavra", arranged by Billy Ternent, which won praise from both the composer and the press.

The Hylton showband recorded two charming light orchestral pieces in 1931, and did so with faultless taste. "The Grasshoppers's Dance" had first appeared in 1907, the work of composer and musical director Ernest Bucalossi, who died, aged 69, on April 15, 1933. This recording was backed by Leon Jessel's beautiful intermezzo "The Wedding of the Rose", originally called "Der Rose Hochzeitszug". It was first published in 1911.

Born in Stettin (now Szczecin) on January 22, 1871, Leon Jessel composed operettas which were soon forgotten, but his intermezzo "The Wedding of The Rose" and his novelty "The Parade of The Tin Soldiers", also published in 1911, remained popular for years.



Al Bowlly, 1935-6, at the Rainbow Room in New York, during a broadcast



Ray Noble in New York, 1936

Joe Batten's "Dream"

by G. W. Taylor

Most readers of Hillandale News will know of Joe Batten's book (ref.1). For those who don't, Joe Batten was very much involved with recording in the early days. From 1920 to 1927 he was director of the Velvet Face series of recordings, the prestigious part of the Edison Bell recording business and, after 1927, he fulfilled a similar function with Columbia.

In spite of humble beginnings, Joe developed an appreciation of the more serious musical repertoire. After World War One, Elgar's music was enjoying a vogue with the concert-going public, stimulated by great works such as the Violin Concerto and the 'Cello Concerto. The composer's major vocal works were also popular. However, in those early days, Elgar was not well served by the gramophone and although he *had* been involved with recordings of his music by the Gramophone Company, the catalogues were as yet limited to a few snippets, as pointed out by a correspondent to The Gramophone magazine (ref. 2).

Batten, at that time with Velvet Face, decided that a (more or less) complete recording of Elgar's oratorio, "The Dream of Gerontius" should be attempted. He discussed the problems with Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Company, who advised him that at the then current stage of recording development, the project was hardly possible.

Another concern was that, in the early 1920s, the record-buying public was not used to the idea of complete works, on many records, in an album. Although similar projects had been attempted before, right the way back to G & T's complete "Pagliacci", such examples were unusual and, in many cases, the records that made up a complete work were often released and sold quite separately.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, Batten went ahead with what he later looked back on as the achievement of which he was most proud amongst his recording activities. It should also be recalled that HMV and Columbia were the dominating giants of the British recording industry at the time, and that a complete "Dream" would be a real feather in the cap for a relatively small company such as his.

This was 1924 and records were still being made by the acoustic process. Batten had to cut the score somewhat in order to convince his directors that he had a saleable proposition in mind – and indeed, such cutting, often extremely drastic, was the norm in those days, arousing the ire of the purist (as for instance as detailed in ref. 3).

With the acoustic process, it was also impossible to utilise the large orchestra and chorus usual in a concert performance of the "Dream". Instead of the normal forty or fifty strings, he made do with nine, in an orchestra totalling twenty-four; and instead of a chorus of anywhere between sixty and three hundred voices, he used only eight, "selected from picked artistes". His orchestra of twenty-four, choir of eight and three soloists, with himself as conductor, were gathered round three small recording horns, cramped for space in a studio thirty feet by eight feet.

Recording seems to have taken about a week. Elgar, who was keenly interested, was kept informed of progress, but was unable to visit the studio because of his loyalty to the Gramophone Company.

The recording was released on eight double-sided 12" records, Edison Bell Velvet Face VF 591 to 598, (not twelve discs as Compton Mackenzie wrote, presumably in a slip of the pen – ref. 4). The press advertisement described the contents of the sixteen sides, and gave the soloists – Dan Jones, tenor; Edith Furmedge, mezzo; and David Brazell, bass. The two former artists became staff singers with Columbia during Batten's period. Furmedge married Algerian baritone Dinh Gilly, presumably after the termination of the latter's affair with the soprano Emmy Destinn.

The recording of "The Dream of Gerontius" was received with critical acclaim. It was reviewed in the Gramophone for October 1924 (ref. 5). The reviewer, P. P., also described the cuts in the score in detail; but the sixteen sides must have played for upwards of an hour and so represented, in the words of the reviewer, a "very liberal selection". P. P. approved of the recording in general. The tenor and mezzo soloists were particularly praised. His major criticism lay with the balance of the recording of the choir, wherein the male voices tended to swamp the female. He also notes one or two occasions of "strange shrill un-Elgarian sounds . . . which must have crept in during the recording".

That the recording was indeed a feather in Velvet Face's cap is borne out not only by the review, but by other comments in *The Gramophone*. We have seen Compton Mackenzie praising it in his quarterly review (ref. 4) and again in 1925 (ref. 6). However, I wonder whether it was a financial success; but then we have to face the problem of the value of critical acclaim in one area of business on the fortunes of another.

The Dream of Gerontius ELGAR

19 in. Gramophone Records

Track	Duration
1. Introduction	1.15
2. The Dream	1.15
3. The Dream	1.15
4. The Dream	1.15
5. The Dream	1.15
6. The Dream	1.15
7. The Dream	1.15
8. The Dream	1.15
9. The Dream	1.15
10. The Dream	1.15
11. The Dream	1.15
12. The Dream	1.15
13. The Dream	1.15
14. The Dream	1.15
15. The Dream	1.15
16. The Dream	1.15

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The Cast:

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EDITH FURMEDGE (Mezzo)
DAVID BRAZELL (Bass)

The Composer: The Author: The Conductor:

EDWARD ELGAR (Composer)
JOHN GOSS (Author)
JOSEPH KEATON (Conductor)

The DAILY TELEGRAPH
says:
"A truly significant and remarkable achievement"

Gramophone advert for "Dream", October 1924

References

1. "Joe Batten's Book, The Story of Sound Recording", by Joe Batten, London, 1956.
2. Letter by Edward Robey, *The Gramophone*, November 1924, p. 205.
3. R. Goodchild, *The Gramophone*, May 1925, p. 484.
4. *The Gramophone*, November 1924, p. 192.
5. Review by P. P., *The Gramophone*, October 1924, p. 176.
6. *The Gramophone*, February 1925, p. 314.

The Argosy No. II – an unusual phonograph

by G. Pugh

I have searched in vain for information relating to a phonograph which I purchased many years ago. Amongst other points of interest, the reproducer uses a spring to maintain stylus-bar pressure rather in the manner of Columbia's Lyric reproducer, unlike the usual Edison system.

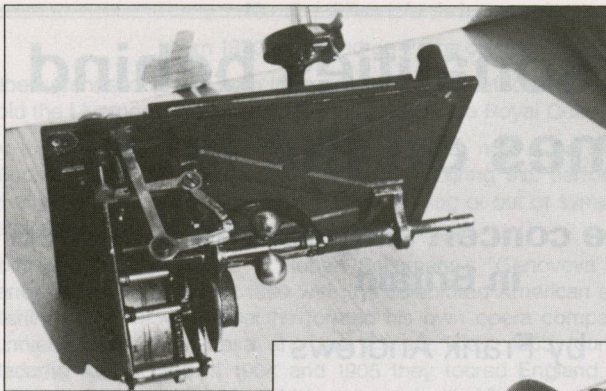
I cannot recall it being mentioned in any of the journals, so perhaps someone reading this account may be able to shed a little more light on the manufacturer and history of this interesting machine.



The case is similar to that of the Edison Standard and measures overall 12" X 9" X 11" high (Photo 1). The only markings on the whole machine read :

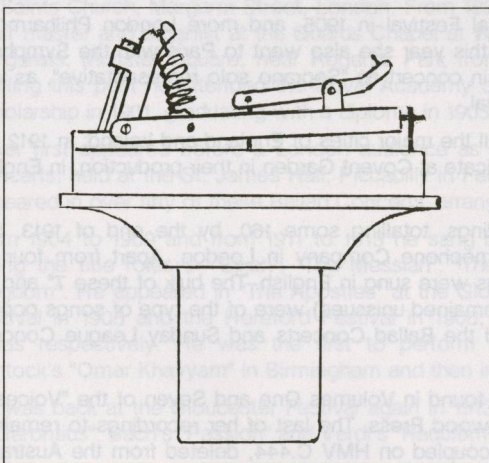
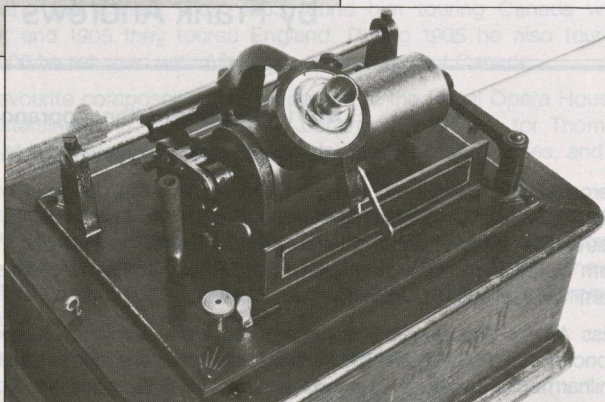
"ARGOSY No II. Made in Germany."

There are no name plates attached to the mechanism and the reproducer is also unmarked.



The mechanism is well made (see photos over the page) and a gear change enables the machine to play two and four minute cylinders of standard size. A horn support socket is attached to the right hand side of the bedplate.

An unusual feature of the machine is the reproducer; it is similar in size to the Edison Model B but the



pressure on the stylus is maintained by a spring, as shown in the scale drawing at the foot of the page. The reproducer is not a dual-purpose one, so presumably a second reproducer would be required to play both two and four minute cylinders.

G. Pugh

(Mr. Pugh may be contacted via the Editor, who would also welcome similar contributions from members with machines that one does not see every day!)

The personalities behind the names on the labels

Notes on some concert singers who recorded in Britain

by Frank Andrews

No. 1 – Perceval Allen, soprano

born 188?, recorded on Berliner, G & T and HMV

Perceval Allen was born in Ripon, Derbyshire, the daughter of a Doctor of Medicine. She was educated in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, but having taken up singing received instruction in her musical studies from William Shakespeare (1849 – 1931), by then retired from his professorship of singing at the Royal Academy of Music and, in 1914, was living in Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood, London.

Miss Allen's first principal engagements were with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Concerts in 1903 and 1905 in which latter year she came south to take part in the London Philharmonic Society's Concerts in London. She made her London debut by singing Max Bruch's "Ave Maria", but she had by this time already made over sixty-five recordings for The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd in London on 7", 10" and 12" discs, all solo vocal recordings.

She performed at the Norwich Triennial Festival in 1905, and more London Philharmonic Concerts followed during 1905. During this year she also went to Paris with the Symphony Orchestra and Leeds Choir, appearing in concert as "Soprano solo representative", as well as performing at the 1906 Handel Festival.

During the next six years she sang in all the major cities of England and Ireland; in 1912 she was engaged by the Royal Opera Syndicate at Covent Garden in their production, in English, of Wagner's "Ring Cycle".

She had made the last of her recordings, totalling some 160, by the end of 1913. She apparently recorded only for The Gramophone Company in London. Apart from four 12" discs sung in German, all her recordings were sung in English. The bulk of these 7" and 10" sides (including those recordings that remained unissued) were of the type of songs popular with those people who often attended the Ballad Concerts and Sunday League Concerts before the Great War.

Details of her many recordings can be found in Volumes One and Seven of the "Voices of the Past" series, published by The Oakwood Press. The last of her recordings to remain in the catalogue were 03277 and 03317, coupled on HMV C.444, deleted from the Australian catalogue in June 1929 over sixteen years after they were first issued.

No. 2 – Albert Archdeacon, baritone

born 1870, recorded on Pathe cylinder and G & T discs.

Albert Archdeacon was born in Liverpool and educated at the Liverpool Institute, going on to hold the Liverpool Scholarship for four years at the Royal College of Music.

By the late 1890s he was a performer of some note – he sang before Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle in Delibes' "Le Roi l'a Dit"; during this performance he was taken ill and whether or not out of appreciation of his singing or out of sympathy for his illness he left the castle with a large signed engraving of the Queen.

Following an appearance in Robert Schumann's "Genoveva" at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, he toured Britain in 1899 with the celebrated American contralto, Madame Antoinette Sterling. The following year he formed his own opera company with which he toured the sunnier climes of Madeira and the Canary Isles. 1903 found him touring Canada with Madame Albani, and in 1904 and 1905 they toured England. During 1905 he also toured England with Melba, and in 1906 he returned with Albani for another tour of Canada.

Wagner was said to be his favourite composer and he appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in "Der Meistersinger" in 1904. He then became a manager for Thomas Beecham's Opera Company at His Majesty's Theatre in London and at other venues, and in 1911 was appointed manager of the Aldwych Theatre in London.

Pathe Freres (London) Ltd. issued three recordings of Archdeacon in 1905, on both Standard and Salon (Intermediate, 3 1/2" mandrel size) cylinders : 60940 – "Land of Hope and Glory"; 60941 – "The Happy Farmer"; 60942 – "Off to Philadelphia". Only one of the five sides known to have been recorded for The Gramophone Company was issued, a duet with Perceval Allen of Shakespeare's "It was a Lover and his Lass", on 4441.

No. 3 – Dalton Baker, "Britain's Greatest Baritone"

born October 1879, recorded Odeon and Columbia-Rena

Born in Merton, Surrey, Dalton Baker's musical career began when he became a choirboy at All Saints Church, Margaret Street, London. From 1894 to 1896 he occupied the dual post of choir master and organist at the Guards Chapel at Windsor. He moved on from there to St, Margarets, Munster Square, near Regents Park from 1896 to 1903. At the same time as fulfilling this post he attended the Royal Academy of Music, having won the Mence Smith Scholarship in 1901, graduating with a diploma in 1903.

Baker first appeared before a London audience as a baritone soloist in one of the Ballad Concerts, held at the St. James Hall, Piccadilly in February 1902. Between 1902 and 1908 he appeared in over fifty of these Ballad Concerts, arranged by Chappell's, the music publishers.

From 1904 to 1909 and from 1911 to 1913 he sang in the Royal Choral Society's concerts, taking the title roles in "Elijah", "The Messiah", "The Golden Angel", "Hiawatha" and "The Kingdom". He appeared in "The Apostles" at the Gloucester Festival in 1904, the Worcester Festival in 1905 and the Hereford Festival in 1906, singing the roles of Peter, Christ and Judas respectively. He was the first to perform the leading baritone role in Granville Bantock's "Omar Khayyam" in Birmingham and then in London in 1906.

He was back at the Gloucester Festival again in 1913 where he sang in "Elijah", "The Dream of Gerontius", Bach's "Passion" and Verdi's "Requiem".

Appearances throughout the country followed with many prestigious choral societies including the London Choral Society, the Broadwood Concerts and the Promenade Concerts – both at the Crystal Palace and the Queen's Hall.

One of his most prestigious engagements was a command performance at a State Concert at Windsor Castle, in November 1905 on the occasion of a State Visit by the King of Greece.

His overseas activities included a "Jensen Tour" and four visits to the United States, one of which was to participate in a Festival in Cincinnati for which he had been specially engaged from England.

Thirty-five 10 3/4" and two 12" sides, on Odeon, were issued by The International Talking Machine Co., G. m. b. h. of Berlin, which Fonotipia Limited of London had taken over before the date of his last recording sessions for them. All thirty-seven sides were issued between 1907 and 1910; twenty-nine were ballads and songs, four were Oratorio excerpts, three from English operas and one from a musical – "The Duchess of Danzig".

Many of the earliest discs, which had been issued under the agency of Sterling & Hunting Ltd., were re-recorded and given new side-numbers. In May and June 1908, just prior to Messrs. Barnett Samuel & Sons, Ltd taking on the entire Odeon, Jumbo and Fonotipia agency, four of Baker's sides were issued in single-sided format, with the blue, white and gold labels, the reverse carrying the impressed trade mark of the cupola surmounting the Paris Opera. Barnett Samuel re-numbered all Sterling & Hunting's plain or "A"-prefixed catalogue numbers into their own "O"-prefixed series and begun the first 12" series of English Odeon records with "X" prefixes.

After the 1914 – 1918 war, with Baker's matrices held in Berlin, The International Talking Machine Co. – "Odeonwerke", then a Carl Lindstrom A. G. – controlled company, issued the whole of his repertoire, with the exception of Tosti's "Parted" and F. Aylward's "Song of the Bow".

However, a look at the 1922 English Odeon catalogue shows these sides, their side numbers prefixed with an "X", as credited to George Baker! George Baker did have six of his former Odeon sides in the 1922 catalogue but they were 10" records, which had been issued contemporaneously with the 10 3/4" records a couple of years before the outbreak of war in 1914.

Finally, The Columbia Graphophone Co. of New York and London issued eighteen sides on its 12" Columbia-Rena records between April 1913 and January 1915, including re-recordings of some of the Odeon repertoire.

The last of his issued to be deleted was Lohr's "Messmates" and Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory", which finally left the catalogue in March 1926.

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Letters

Dear Editor,

I was interested in the material in the December issue of Hillandale News about the records sold by chain stores, and am sending some photos of needle tins sold by some of the stores Len Watts mentioned in his letter on this subject, plus a few he did not mention.

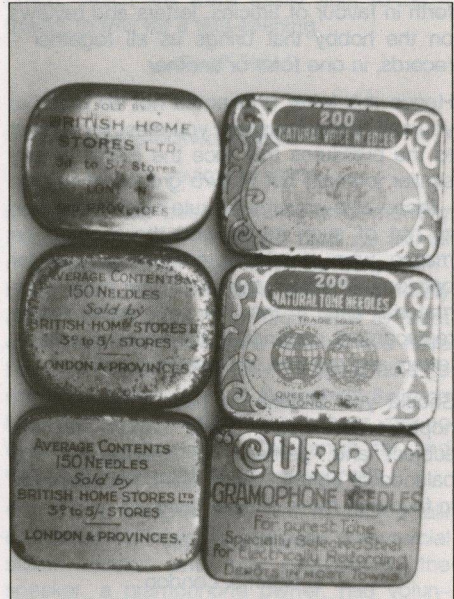
Photo 1: the two BHS tins are red, gold and black. The back is shown in photo 2. Britex also belonged to BHS – these tins were the same colours with space for the BHS address. The Sylvaphones were from the Co-op – CWS; soft tone was green, the other red.

Photo 2: Whiteley's tins are gold, green and cream. The very rare Curry tin is green, with the name in gold. The Whiteley's tins show the world, surmounted by the company name.

Photo 3: The Gamages tins are in red, gold and white. The Harrods is just a dark tin with a paper label – is there a 'proper' Harrods tin? Wilson Peck is still doing business as a music shop, as is J. B. Cramer.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Lambert, Northampton





Dear Editor,

I am sure I cannot be the only reader who tends to 'skim over' such items as the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, the Treasurer's Report, Annual Accounts and so forth in favour of articles, letters and reviews on the hobby that brings us all together – records, in one form or another.

Hence this letter is directed not so much at yourself (since I suspect you must be subject to the pressures that face the Editor of any similar journal!) but at two groups of people – those who presumably rule on the inclusion or not of such items, and the readers en masse who should determine, by popular opinion, whether *they* wish to read such material and, if they do not, must supply replacement material, in the form of articles, letters and reviews, as mentioned above!

Should you choose to publish this letter I hope it will spark some debate on the subject and, perhaps, to changes in the balance of content away from 'Proceedings' in favour of more original fare,

Yours sincerely,
J. Rennie, London

Dear Editor,

I can't remember the exact date but I remember the event well – the second manned American landing on the moon. Why the second landing, you may ask? The reason apparently was that despite using exactly the same television equipment as on the first landing the picture quality arriving in our homes was considerably better than that of the first attempt. It seems the Americans had devised a way of 'cleaning up' the picture by means of a computer.

Since then I have been convinced that computer technology was in all probability the best way of improving the sound quality of old recordings.

Then, a couple of years ago, I heard of CEDAR and I believe I was one of the first to attend a demonstration at the National Sound Archive. I was delighted and suitably impressed! I am therefore a little piqued that Mr. Hanser of Florida has accused me of 'knocking' CEDAR, simply because I disagreed with the remarks of Mr. Gordon Reid of Cambridge Audio, the company at present marketing the system, when he spoke of the material of which 78s are composed being unstable and subject to decomposition.

Just to set the record straight finally about what I meant, I reiterate that, *given reasonable care and correct storage conditions*, 78s are practically indestructible – as can be seen in 90-year-old-odd examples that are lucky enough to have been stored reasonably correctly. Provided they have not been stored in, for instance, damp conditions (which will foster mould growth, the mold actually surviving by living off the material of the records themselves, causing irreparable damage), and have been stored vertically, with enough pressure between neighbouring discs to prevent warping, etc, they'll surely outlast Mr. Reid himself!

Yours sincerely,
Rick Hardy, Watford

Meetings Reports

Bloomsbury, 18th September 1990

Firstly our apologies to George Woolford for the non-appearance of this report – your reporter must plead guilty to having temporarily mislaid the papers in his files! The recital was called "The Twenty-Fives", meaning 25cm records and consisted entirely of early 10" G&Ts, although many were later upgraded to Red Label. Among some two dozen items we heard Kirkby-Lunn, Ben Davies, Maurice Renaud, Andrew Black, Emma Calve, Mattia Battistini as well as less familiar names.

On the lighter side were Burt Shepard, Eric Greene, Kate Cove, Louis Bradfield and Dan Leno. There were also lantern slides of the artistes and contemporary song-sheets. George is to be congratulated on his meticulous preparation, including full notes with catalogue and matrix numbers and record speeds, an essential aspect of enjoyment of these records.

We hope for a return visit from George before too long, bringing more tantalising glimpses – aurally and visually – of some very desirable items.

Len Watts

Bloomsbury, 18th December 1990

Owing to technical problems with the record playing equipment, our planned programme was cancelled and our Chairman, Peter Martland, stepped in to regale us with tales of his "Visit to America". This was illustrated with recordings he had been able to make there during his research, mainly of the Berliner family and the early history of the disc record, many courtesy of the Library of Congress. The cancelled programme, "Free for All", will be held at a future date.

Geoff Edwards, Meetings Secretary

Midlands Group ASM, 19 January 1991

(Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham)

A somewhat depleted attendance this time, with several regulars absent including our Chairman, Eddie Dunn – which did not prevent his being re-elected Chairman, as well as the re-election of all the other Committee officers. Future meetings dates were established (as detailed on the following page). Eddie sent along his review of the year, which was high-lighted by our exhibition staged at the local Dudley Show in August. However we lost three meetings through lack of suitable premises – we hope for better things in 1991.

The evening's programme, "An evening of Edison cylinders" was presented by Phil Bennett, our secretary. He included a dozen 4-minutes, including examples by the New York Military Band, Collins & Harlan and Jack Charman. Phil asked us to imagine a typical family sitting around the fire about 1912, listening to their pride and joy, the phonograph, which we were easily able to do – thanks to Phil for a fine evening.

Geoff Howl

The Clockwork Music Group

A review of 1990

Our group has been meeting at bi-monthly intervals since 1977, but we have no formal membership other than long-standing members of CLPGS. I'm sure there are many members out there who might wish to meet other members from time to time! We have been fortunate up to now in being able to use an activities room at Newcastle Science Museum. Our meetings centre on talking machines and records, but range far and wide, off the beaten track occasionally.

Our first meeting in 1990 was actually a talk on garden railways, in particular commercial steam models and their peculiarities; the speaker, a gramophone owner, had volunteered – all good stuff!

Our next meeting was given by one of our younger members and was a recital on a portable from his extensive accumulation of oddities. Memorable items included "The Singing Dogs", "The Lords Prayer" in Urdu (guess the language!), Waffle from the late Prince of Wales and The Song of The Volga Boatman as a harp solo, all much enjoyed. David Twigg also gave a vintage film show – which unfortunately I missed – any reports please from those who attended? Our September meeting was a musical quiz given by Ray Stephenson – the point being to date the recording to the nearest decade, identify the artist and the work.

We rounded off the year with our regular magic lantern show by local authority Derek Greenacre, author of the 'Shire' booklet on Magic Lanterns.

We have displays of toys, phonographs, gramophones and musical boxes at most of our meetings. One gent excelled himself, with a large chamber barrel organ. David Twigg brought an enviable selection of cylinders, as well as my modest offerings of an Edison Cylinder Catalogue and – long-sought – a Clarion Disc.

Phil Bailey, Clockwork Music Group

Forthcoming London and regional Meetings

London Meetings

Meetings held on the 4th floor, Bloomsbury Baptist Church, 7pm, on usually the third Tuesday evening of the month

April 16th – "G. H. I. & Comedy Records
– a cylinder programme"

May 21st – "Historic Piano Recordings"
by Peter Adamson

*Details of further meetings were unavailable
at the time of going to press*

Note: due to an error, the starting time of the London meetings was mistakenly printed as 7.30. Our apologies – the time has NOT been altered and remains at 7.00pm, Tuesdays.

Midlands Group

Meetings at Carr Lane Methodist Centre
Birmingham, at

May 18th – (Another) Musical Quiz
by Will Fowler

July 20th, Sept 21st, Nov 16th – TBA

Clockwork Music Group

Meetings in the Activities Room, Science Museum, Blandford St., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Saturdays, 2pm to 4.15pm

May 11th – "Oil and Grease Paint" – Some
Theatrical Reminiscences
by Veronica Twiddle

July 20th – Ed. Bardsley's Musical Quiz
(bring your own pencils!)

September 21st – Vintage Film Show, a
variety of entertainment
by David Twigg

December 14th – "A Thrill in The Dark", our
annual Magic Lantern show
by D. Greenacre.

80 Years of Phonograph & Gramophone Societies

The CLPGS from its early beginnings to today,

by J. Calvert, Society Archivist

To mark eighty years of the Society, which traces its roots back to 1911, an Exhibition is being mounted at the Nicol Arts Centre in Cirencester from the 2nd September 1991 to the 8th September 1991.

The exhibition will chart not just the progress of the Society through the years, but also the development of sound recording throughout that period. During the course of the week, there will be a series of lectures given by well known authorities on the various aspects of recording and machines, as well as a demonstration of the modern methods used in transcribing early records on to compact disc.

This event is one which is receiving national coverage on both television and radio, with a live transmission of the opening ceremony and an interview with some of the Society's personalities.

Can you loan the Society any material for display ?

Security of your exhibits is guaranteed. If you think you can help with any kind of display material, whatever its size, age or origin, please contact:

Mike Field, [REDACTED]

Can you spare any time to help set up the exhibition, or man the displays ?

Help is needed to set up on Sunday, 1st September from 10.00 am onwards.

Help is also needed to staff the exhibition, and if any member can spare a day to help with this, please contact:

John Calvert, [REDACTED]

Telephone - [REDACTED]

Members coming to the Society AGM, which will be held on Saturday, 7th September, might like to consider coming the night before and attending the Friday evening lecture and recital, details of which will be given in the next issue of Hillandale. A list of reasonable cost accommodation can be obtained from John Calvert, address as above.

To mark the Society's Exhibition and AGM in Cirencester, the Mayor of Cirencester will be giving a Civic Reception for those members attending, at lunchtime on that Saturday.

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT ISSUE OF HILLANDALE NEWS FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Abridged Balance Sheet

year ending 8 August 1990

Receipts

Payments

Current account B/F.....	4277.15	Hillandale printing & post.....	4315.28
Subscriptions.....	6176.75	Bloomsbury Room hire.....	275.00
Advertising.....	916.89	Computer Maint.....	210.45
Sale of Books.....	5493.53	Purchase of Books/post.....	3589.44
Misc.....	163.50	Misc. inc. gen. post.....	1040.25
		DeskTop Publ. system.....	1546.75
		Sterling bank bal.....	6050.65
Totals.....	17027.82		17027.82

In addition at 1 August 1990 there is \$4601.99 in the US dollar account made up from subscriptions and book receipts. A substantial amount will be transferred to the UK account later in the year.

Treasurer's note: Any member requiring the full audited accounts may obtain them from the Treasurer by sending a large stamped addressed envelope.

Mike Field, Treasurer, [REDACTED]

From the Rostrum

Christie's South Kensington

December 13th 1990

1990 must surely go down in Mechanical Music annals as the year of the Re-entrant. A 203 made a record £5,500 in April, and in this last sale of the year, a mere 193 reached £3,800. This was a fine example, admittedly, original and untouched, complete down to its instruction book and soundbox carton. In the soundbox however lay its one fault: the dreaded Mazak disease had got at the back-

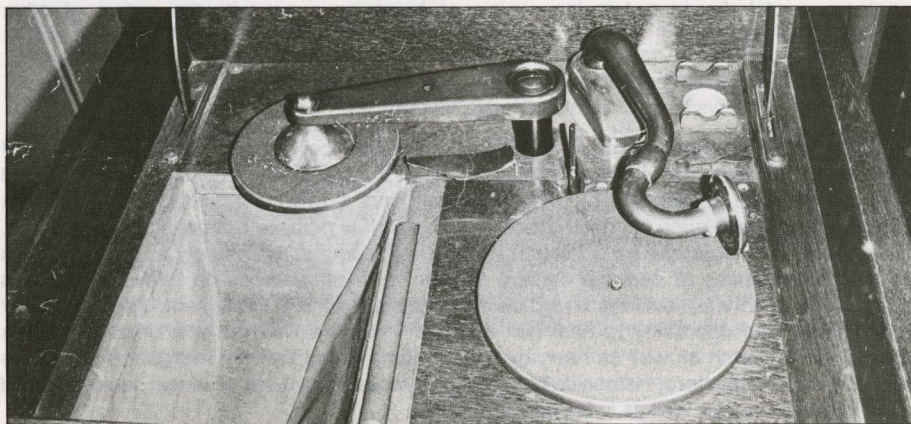
plate, distorting the frame and thus the stylus-bar pivots. In such circumstances, the famous bass to which original potential customers were exhorted to listen is conspicuous by its absence. By a happy coincidence, the 193 was followed in the catalogue by a 192, its immediate predecessor in 1927. The 192 was the largest of the short-lived series of 'saxophone'-horn cabinets with square lids, current for the 1927-8 season. In July 1927 a mahogany 192 cost £45, exactly the same as the 193 (in oak only) in October of the same year. In December 1990, a mahogany 192 went for a mere £120. He who hesitated in July 1927 was certainly not lost - or, more likely, his heirs weren't.

Far rarer than either of those was the Automatic Model 10. The Model 1 is familiar enough, but the 10 was new to me, one which never seems to have got into an HMV catalogue. It is more compact than the 1, with the used record chute on the left-hand side. The lifting arm grips the record by the spindle hole rather than by the rim. It is the acoustic predecessor of the electric W12. Rarity, however, does not always bring home the bacon: the Model 10 made £1500, respectable enough for a large cabinet model but a bargain compared with the 193. If Re-entrants are beyond your reach, you could do worse than go for one of their Columbia rivals, with Plano-Reflex horns. Most collectors are familiar with the Plano-Reflex tone-arm, fitted to most Columbias in 1929, but only larger cabinets had horns built on the same principle. One such was the 132a; at 18 guineas in 1929, it was very good value for money and remains so at £130 in 1990. Allowing about £10 for the HMV fibre cutter which accompanied it, this puts it on a par with the 192. Not everything in the sale was big; there was a Lioret Le Merveilleux, in its maroon cardboard case 7 1/2" high, which brought £1,300, and a Columbia BS (coin-slot) phonograph at £1,100 (a price level which seems to have remained unchanged for several years).

Nipper appeared in a choice of three sizes: 36", 13 1/2" and 11" high. They had come originally from Hindley's, a gramophone shop in Clumber Street, Nottingham which made its own gramophones under the name of Clumberphone. The big'un made £1,100, the medium sized £900 and the small chap £380. On the subject of 'Nipperie', a silver salver presented to an EMI employee after 25 years' service reached £380, although it was unsold – the owner was hoping for more. It came complete with wooden stand, a recognisable product of the cabinet factory at Hayes, the wood of identical colour and finish to so many HMV gramophones, and even the brown felt on the contact points was familiar.

One of the stranger Kastenpuck variations, in which the horn consists of a cast metal lily flower supporting a gnome and is connected to the reproducer by a tone-arm made £420. Given that the tone-arm was missing (has anyone seen one of these complete?) this was a very respectable price. Condition was otherwise good, with original paintwork simulating the verdigris of a well-weathered bronze statue. Was this machine intended as the first musical garden gnome?

Christopher Proudfoot



HMV Automatic Model 10 (Photo – C. Proudfoot)

Obituaries

The great Cuban pianist Jorge Bolet died late last year at the age of seventy-six and his loss is greatly felt throughout the pianistic world. A pupil of Josef Hofmann, Bolet exhibited much of his celebrated master's superhuman virtuosity and complete mastery of his instrument. He also possessed one of the most important prerequisites of a truly great artist – a totally individual and immediately recognisable sound. This is something lacking in almost all of the current crop of concert artists and the loss of some one such as Bolet who was still very much active on the world concert circuit is therefore especially sad – he was one of a swiftly diminishing minority. He was also a teacher of some note and it is good to know that he was able to pass on some of his enormous knowledge to students.

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The composer Aaron Copland died at the age of ninety (only a few weeks after one of his most famous prodigies, Leonard Bernstein). Although age had curtailed his activities Copland maintained a position as one of the senior American musical figures of the twentieth century – and one of the most widely-known names of his generation. Copland's musical education began at a very early age with piano lessons from V. Wittgenstein and Clarence Adler. After high school graduation in 1918 he studied harmony for four years with Rubin Goldmark. From these relatively humble beginnings Copland went on to become the leading spirit in American music. In his earlier years, Copland also responded to the jazz influence in American music and made one of the most successful attempts of any composer to combine this strand with classical influences. Had George Gershwin lived a similar lifespan it would have been fascinating to contrast their handling of jazz and classical music! Copland broke down many barriers – some perhaps mainly in the minds of his public – in the acceptance of indigenous American music as being on a par with the output of other countries and past eras.

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Finally an especially unexpected death, that of the French 'cellist Paul Tortelier, at the age of seventy-six. Tortelier had suffered from some heart trouble for the last ten years or so and was one of those people who probably could not have slowed down his pace of life even had he wanted to. Hence his death from a heart attack is perhaps not quite so unexpected. But what an enormous gap he will leave! A household name in this country as much from his concert appearances all over the country as from his masterclasses on television, he was one of the most vital, exciting and passionate players of any instrument. I'm sure many readers had the opportunity to hear him over the years; he was the sort of player that is always fun to watch as well as hear, by which I don't mean that he indulged in excessive and unnecessary platform histrionics but that his obvious enjoyment of music communicated itself in his manner as well as in his sound.

Jim Walsh

20 July 1910 to 24 December 1990

Older collectors will recall Jim Walsh's long-running series of articles in "Hobbies" (in the USA) that ran under the title of "Favourite Pioneer Recording Artists", beginning in the early 1930s, bringing us much information unavailable elsewhere. Every month for over 40 years he produced an article on some aspect of lighter entertainment. Sometimes it was about one performer, a composer, a lyricist, or sometimes on a genre of song, such as those inspired by Red Indians, the Civil War or railroads, and so forth. Mr. Walsh also had a wonderful knowledge of musical shows and their artists. He had a large collection of early records, magazines and catalogues (the latter including European ones). So much so that he surprised me with information I sought during research. Typical of his public-spirited nature he donated his whole collection to The Library of Congress several years ago, where it may now be consulted by all.

Of latter years it was frequently suggested to Jim Walsh and "Hobbies" that the "Favourite Pioneer Recording Artists" articles be reprinted complete in one volume. Mr. Walsh refused permission because he knew that some of his articles, especially the earlier ones, could benefit from revision in the light of newly unearthed knowledge. Owing to the otherwise unavailable information, such a reprint would be very valuable. Jim Walsh was fond of cats and had several. They were mentioned occasionally in his articles, especially the most intelligent, Professor Plum Duff. If you were privileged to meet Jim, or hear him on tapes you would have been surprised at first to hear his Southern accent (he lived at Vinton, Virginia). Its warmth was as genuine as he was.

Ernie Bayly

Betty Warren (Babette Hilda Hogan)

31 October 1907 to 15 December 1990

Betty Warren had a long and distinguished stage, variety and film career, beginning as a small child at the King's Theatre, Southsea, as straight actress, comedienne and mimic. During WWI she entertained the troops, and was in Variety theatres throughout the 1920s and 30s. Particular hits included the musical play "Balalaika" and Shaw's "The Apple Cart", with Noel Coward and Margaret Leighton. Filmgoers may recall her in "Passport to Pimlico" and as Music Hall star Bessie Bellwood in "Champagne Charlie". In 1933 she married Lawrence Wright and had a daughter, Lawrette, but the marriage ended in divorce; In 1946 she married Lloyd Shakespeare. Probably less-well known is the fact that in December 1934 she recorded Arthur LeClerc's comedy song "Nobody Loves a Fairy When She's Forty" with Jack Jackson's Dorchester Hotel Orchestra, on HMV BD. 101.

Betty Warren was a great lady of the theatre, whose end was peaceful, after a short illness. We offer our sincere condolences to Mrs. Lawrette Williams, nee Wright, whose relationship with her mother was close.

Peter Cliffe

Reviews

"Talking Furniture"

Videos of US Machine Collections,
introduced by their owners

In the April 1990 Hillandale News members' attention was drawn to a professionally made video featuring prominent American collectors describing their phonographs.

This was called **"Talking Furniture"** and was the first such attempt to show these experts describing their treasures, to be followed by several more videos from the same producers, about phonograph and gramophone collections, produced to the same excellent standards.

No. 1, from a series of 7, visits **The Howard Hazelcorn Collection**. Mr. Hazelcorn will be known to some for his *Collectors' Guide to the Columbia Spring Wound Graphophones (APM Press)* and his attraction to these machines is reflected in the eclectic quality of these early, fragile looking cylinder graphophones of great rarity.

All those demonstrated were however neat, smooth-running, positive, clean (an essential point) and good to look at, far removed from the dirty, cracked unplayable pot-metal mechanisms sometimes found – and discarded at a glance!

Also shown were classic Bettini machines and an impressive handful of Amet motors, the first successful spring motors made for driving graphophones and Edison machines.

This is an advanced collection, mainly nineteenth century, lucidly introduced by Howard Hazelcorn, helped by good camera work and clear close-ups.

Another leading American expert who has done much for the hobby is **Allen Koenigsberg**. He is **No. 3** in this collection, introducing a varied body of rare machines and a few phono novelties and ornaments.

In contrast with the earlier video taken with a moving camera, this one consists entirely of a series of fade-ins and fade-outs of Allen Koenigsberg introducing choice items from his collection, including tin-foil machines, a Lioret doll and a Lioret speaking alarm clock. Again he has several Graphophones to show, including a Bell and Tainter with the cardboard tube – how does one get it the right way round? – and the first Graphophone for standard cylinders that needed dismantling in order to change the record.

Unlike Howard Hazelcorn, Allen Koenigsberg plays only one instrument, the speaking alarm clock but compensates by supplying many anecdotes, as well as some of the history and drama behind some of the patents.

Again this is a well-produced video and of wider general interest perhaps. Very few indeed of the phonographs featured in these two programmes could be found outside the United States, and this seems an ideal way to get to know them better. The rest of this Collection Series of videos are as follows: –

Vol II – Charley Hummel Collection (very rare Edisonia)

Vol IV – Fran Merancy Collection (early Berliners to complete '01 Victor product line)

Vol V – Ray Phillips Collection (Tinfoil, Treadle, Water and luxury Edison machines)

Vol VI – The Tinfoil Collection (ratchet and London Stereoscopic tinfoil machines, etc.)

Vil VII – John Woodward Collection (Edison Clockwork Home, oldest spring wound Berliner, Stroh weight phono, Multiphone).

These videos cost \$19.95 each plus p&p \$3.00 and are obtainable from:

U. S. S. Inc., [REDACTED]

LOS ANGELES, CA 90065, USA.

They are in VHS but in the American NTSC mode and must be copied to PAL (625 lines) mode for European machines.

George Frow

Enrico Caruso – Complete Recordings

14 CDs (plus one demonstration CD containing examples of the transfer techniques employed) containing 238 titles.

Bayer-Records, Heidelberg

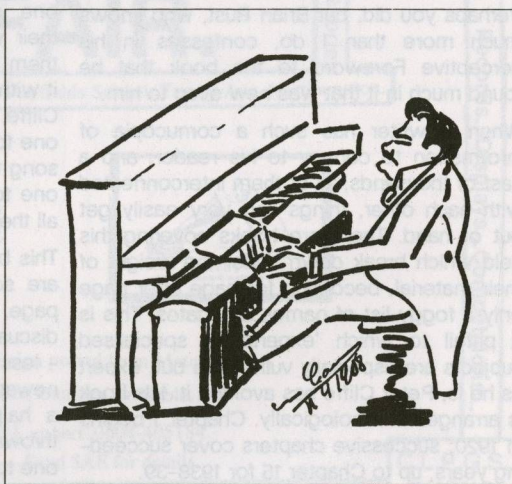
A small company in Germany has just published Caruso's complete recordings, on 14 CDs – some 238 titles, listed with matrix numbers and full details.

The transfers were made using the "NoNoise" programme of the San Francisco Sonic Solutions company, which deals with all manner of audio noises, both transient and constant, in the form of hiss, whistle etc. Like most digital systems, the computer reconstructs portions rendered unusable by noises, thereby preserving the original length and hopefully without affecting upper partials too much. In most cases the results are excellent – some of the earliest items however were clearly difficult to find in top condition, and allowances must be made.

Following the development of the voice from the first recordings to the final ones of 16th September 1920 is fascinating. The price of the 14 CDs, plus the demonstration CD of the transfer techniques, is £74, including p&p (which at £5.29 per CD is reasonable).

Klaus Spazier

[Although not a dealer or retailer, Herr Spazier has very kindly offered to supply the CD set, upon receipt of a Eurocheque, Bank Draft or similar, and may be contacted at: [REDACTED] Mannheim 1, Germany for further details – Ed.]



Two caricatured 'self-portraits' in humorous mood by Enrico Caruso

Fascinating Rhythm

By Peter Cliffe

Egon Publishers Ltd., £14.95

(available from the CLPGS Bookshelf)

"Fascinating Rhythm" is a fascinating book. It celebrates the great days of the dance band, those two brief decades of the 1920s and 1930s, and provides a highly-detailed chronicle of the bands, the musicians, the music they played and the composers who wrote for them.

It is a big book in every sense, 282 pages crammed with facts, anecdotes and personalities. I enjoyed every page, for here is that rare combination, a scholarly and informative work of reference which is at the same time a highly entertaining book to curl up with. The statement that in 1927 Bert Ambrose was earning £10,000 a year at the Embassy Club is followed by the interesting snippet that he was likely to gamble the whole lot away at the tables, and possibly the band's payroll as well. And did you know that Clarence Johnston (of Layton and Johnston fame) ran off with the wife of that prince of the Palm Court, Albert Sandler? Perhaps you did, but Brian Rust, who knows much more than I do, confesses in his perceptive Foreword to the book that he found much in it that was new even to him.

When a writer has such a cornucopia of information to convey to his reader, and a cast of thousands, all of them interconnected with each other, things can very easily get out of hand. There are books covering this field which break down under the weight of their material, becoming for page after page only a foggy list of names and dates. This is a pitfall to which 'experts' in specialised subjects are especially vulnerable but, expert as he is, Peter Cliffe has avoided it. His book is arranged chronologically. Chapter 1 begins in 1920: successive chapters cover succeeding years, up to Chapter 15 for 1938-39.

This formula is a difficult one to control if one is not to fragment stories of particular artists, but the author handles it with skill, and succeeds thereby in giving a clear picture of the new dance band craze as it developed year by year, particularly in Britain. A happy consequence of this arrangement is that people keep popping up again as the years pass, just as they do in real life – a little older, usually more successful and sometimes less so. Thus in 1925 (Chapter 3), we find a young trombonist called Ted Heath recording with Stan Greening and the Columbia 'house' band. Two chapters on, in 1927, he is recording with Bert Firmin's Devonshire Restaurant Band, while in Chapter 14 (1937) he is going into Woolworth's on Crown Records with Jay Wilbur's Band, along with vocalist Sam Costa. (Hugo Rignold, who was to become extremely important as Musical Director of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, first appears here in Chapter 5 (1927) as one of a successful dance-band vocal trio; his companion singers were Jack Hylton and Chappie d'Amato. In case any budding researchers are reading this may I make a plea on behalf of *their* future readers? It is all very well for authors to stuff one jewel of knowledge after another into their works, but it is we who have to find them and pull them out again: we cannot do it without an INDEX! Full marks then to Peter Cliffe, who gives us not one index but four: one for people (some 1,600 entries), one for song titles (about 1,000 by my rough count), one for show titles (about 200) and one for all the record labels mentioned.

This book is a pleasure to open. Illustrations are scattered liberally across almost every page, mainly pictures of the personalities discussed. You can buy this book for £14.95 – less than the cost of buying a decent daily newspaper for six weeks. I make it just over a ha'penny per page, with a hard cover thrown in for free. A lovely book to own, and one to which I will return again and again.

Ted Cunningham

C.L.P.G.S.
PHONO
-FAIR.

Gramophones...Phonographs...

Gramophones...

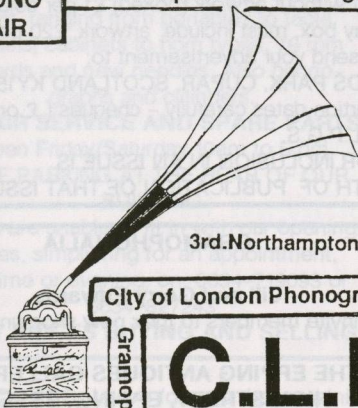
C.L.P.G.S.
PHONO
-FAIR.

Records...Displays...Competitions..

Needle Tins...78's...Accessories...Spares..

Needle Tins...78's...Accessories...Spares..

Records...Displays...Competitions...



3rd.Northampton Phonofair. 10am-4pm.

City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.

Gramophones...Phonographs.

C.L.P.G.S. PHONO -FAIR.

Needle Tins...78's...Accessories

Saturday April 13th. 1991. Fairfield's School, Trinity Ave, Northampton.



Good parking. Well sign posted from Motorway.

Refreshments, Lunches available.

Details: Ruth Lambert. [REDACTED]

Stalls - £7 - Send SAE for details.

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8am to 4pm

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For further information contact:

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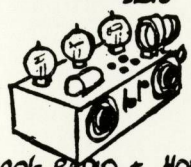


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- 157
- 163
- 193
- 194
- 202
- 203



JAZZ, SWING,
& DANCEBAND
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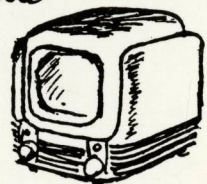
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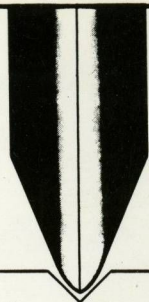


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